

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
OFFICE OF FISCAL AND MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS**

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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 7787

BILL NUMBER: SB 518

DATE PREPARED: Mar 6, 2001

BILL AMENDED: Mar 5, 2001

SUBJECT: Domestic Violence.

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**FUNDS AFFECTED: X GENERAL
DEDICATED
FEDERAL**

IMPACT: State & Local

Summary of Legislation: (Amended) This bill has the following provisions:

(A) It eliminates prepayment of filing fees and witness fees for proceedings filed solely to: (1) obtain a protective order to prevent domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault; or (2) enforce a foreign protection order. (B) It provides for the separation of confidential from nonconfidential information in a petition for a protective order. (C) It allows a court to limit the scope of a protective order, if the court determines that the petition arises from a dispute involving ownership rights, leasehold rights, or easement rights concerning real property. (D) It provides that a protective order is not nullified by an act of the protected person that is inconsistent with the order. It allows an employer to bring an action for a protective order to protect an employee. (E) It provides for the registration and enforcement in Indiana of foreign protection orders issued by another state or an Indian tribe. (F) It grants immunity to a governmental entity or employee, including a law enforcement officer, that registers or enforces a court order in good faith without malice. (G) It expands the types of protective orders to which the crime of stalking applies. (H) It provides that violation of a protective order issued by an Indian tribe or other related tribal government constitutes invasion of privacy.

Effective Date: Upon passage.

Explanation of State Expenditures: (Revised) Provision G will add certain violations of protective orders as offenses that could be punished as Class C felonies. The length of imprisonment for a Class C felony ranges between two and eight years, depending on mitigating and aggravating circumstances.

The average expenditure to house an adult offender was \$20,700 in FY 1999. Individual facility expenditures ranged from \$14,936 to \$37,807. (This does not include the cost of new construction.) If offenders can be housed in existing facilities with no additional staff, the average cost for medical care, food, and clothing is approximately \$1,825 annually, or \$5 daily, per prisoner.

Effects on State Agencies:

The Indiana State Police would be required to modify its computer system to allow for the entry of foreign protection orders into the Indiana Data and Communications System. In addition, the Division of State Court Administration would be required to prescribe and approve form changes for protective orders before July 1, 2001.

Explanation of State Revenues: (Revised) Provision A: This provision would result in a revenue loss to the State General Fund ranging between \$25,313 and \$50,620. However, if legislation prohibiting the payment of filing fees to have a protective order issued in the case of domestic violence charges is not implemented, the state may lose as much as \$7 M in grants from federal sources.

Background: Current statute, IC 33-19-5-4, treats petitions for protective orders as civil filings and charges a \$100 filing fee. Of this fee, a petitioner may pay \$35 upon filing and pay the balance at a later time. This same section also allows the court to waive the fee and require the responding party to pay either the entire fee of \$100 or the \$65 balance. By another section of the statute (IC 34-26-2-4), the court may waive filing fees for protective orders if the petitioner can document an inability to pay the fee. If the fee is waived, the court may order the filing fee to be paid by the responding party.

In practice, counties may treat filing fees for domestic violence cases in one of three ways. They may waive the entire filing fee, charge an initial \$35 and waive the remaining balance of \$65 for a protective order, or allow the petition to be filed in small claims court and charge a \$35 fee. Consequently, the specific revenue loss from this bill is difficult to estimate.

Estimated Number of Cases Affected: In 1999, 21,066 protective orders were reported to be filed in Indiana's courts. Of these, the Marion County Clerk's Office estimates that about 60% of these filings are for domestic violence-related cases. The Marion County Clerk also reports that Marion County no longer collects the filing fee for protective orders in domestic violence cases. Consequently, the number of estimated filings that could be affected by this bill is 10,332.

Estimating the Potential Revenue Loss: It is assumed that the revenue loss from this bill would be from the reduction in the number of filers who would no longer pay the initial \$35 filing fee. As amended, this bill does not prevent the court from collecting court fees from the responding party of a protective order.

Because 70% of the filing fee is deposited in the State General Fund, the revenue loss will range between \$25,000 and \$50,000, as described in the following table.

	Low	High
Protective Order Filings in 1999	21,066	21,066
Percent Domestic (Based on Marion County Estimates)	60%	60%
Estimated Number of Protective Order Filings for Domestic Violence Cases	12,640	12,640
Adjusted Number Paying Filing Fees Excluding Marion County Filings:	10,332	10,332
Fee Paid	\$35	\$35
Assumed Percent Paying	10%	20%
Estimated Loss of Court Fee Revenue	\$36,162	\$72,324
Loss of State Share of Court Fee Revenue at 70%	\$25,313	\$50,627
Loss of Local Share of Court Fee Revenue at 30%	\$10,849	\$21,697

Federal Funding: If the current statute is not amended to automatically waive filing fees and other charges

when a protective order has been requested, the state and local programs would no longer be eligible for funding through the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) under the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). Between 1997 and 2000, Indiana received the following funds. These funds were used for providing financial assistance to local programs that assist victims of domestic abuse.

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000
Revenue Received	\$8,546,000	\$5,889,000	\$5,053,000	\$7,873,000

Provision G and H: Besides a term of incarceration, a Class C felony is also punishable by a maximum fine of \$10,000. The maximum fine for a Class A misdemeanor is \$5,000. The maximum fine for a Class B misdemeanor is \$1,000. Criminal fines are deposited in the Common School Fund. If the case is filed in a circuit, superior, or county court, 70% of the \$120 court fee that is assessed and collected when a guilty verdict is entered would be deposited in the state General Fund. If the case is filed in a city or town court, 55% of the fee would be deposited in the state General Fund.

Explanation of Local Expenditures: (Revised) Provision G and H: A Class B misdemeanor is punishable by up to 180 days in jail while a Class A misdemeanor is punishable by up to one year in jail. The average daily cost to incarcerate a prisoner in a county jail is approximately \$44.

Explanation of Local Revenues: (Revised) Provision A: Counties and municipal governments receive 30% of court fees. Consequently, the revenue loss to these entities would range between \$10,000 and \$21,700, as described in the table above. However, this bill would also prevent the potential revenue loss that local governments would experience if federal assistance for local programs which assist victims of domestic violence (described under state revenues) is eliminated.

Provision G and H: If additional court actions occur and a guilty verdict is entered, local governments would receive revenue from the following sources: (1) The county general fund would receive 27% of the \$120 court fee that is assessed in a court of record. Cities and towns maintaining a law enforcement agency that prosecutes at least 50% of its ordinance violations in a court of record may receive 3% of court fees. (2) A \$3 fee would be assessed and, if collected, would be deposited into the county law enforcement continuing education fund. (3) A \$2 jury fee is assessed and, if collected, would be deposited into the county user fee fund to supplement the compensation of jury members.

State Agencies Affected: Criminal Justice Institute, Indiana State Police, Legislative Council, Division of State Court Administration.

Local Agencies Affected: Programs providing assistance to domestic abuse victims, trial courts, local law enforcement agencies.

Information Sources: 1999 Indiana Judicial Report, Criminal Justice Institute, Marion County Clerk of the Circuit Court.